

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An integrated process for making an inflatable laminated article, comprising the steps of:

(A) extruding a first film and a second film;

(B) cooling the first film and the second film so that the films will not fuse to one another upon contact with each other;

(C) contacting the first film with the second film; and

(D) heating selected portions of at least one of the first and second films to a temperature above a fusion temperature, so that the first and second films are heat sealed to one another at a selected area, with the selected area providing a heat seal pattern which provides inflatable chambers between the first film and the second film.

2. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the selected portions of at least one of the first and second films are heated while they are in contact with one another, with the heat sealing being carried out using a combination of heat and pressure.

3. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the contacting step and the heating step are performed simultaneously.

4. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the first and second films are extruded simultaneously.

5. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the cooling step comprises contacting at least one of the first and second films with at least one cooling roll.

6. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the first and second films are extruded by separate extruders.

7. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the first film and the second film are each extruded as flat sheets.

8. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the heating is performed by passing the first and second films together through a nip formed by a pair of rolls, one of the rolls having a patterned raised surface and at least one of the pair of rolls being heated.

9. The process according to Claim 8, wherein the patterned roll is heated.

10. The process according to Claim 8, wherein the second roll has a raised surface corresponding to the raised surface of the first roll, and the raised surfaces of the first and second rolls are operatively aligned to heat seal the selected portions of the first film and the second film.

11. The process according to Claim 8, wherein the heated roll has a continuous raised surface therearound.

12. The process according to Claim 1, wherein the first and second films are heat sealed to one another in a repeating pattern of sealed and unsealed areas.

13. The process according to Claim 1, wherein heating selected portions of at least one film is carried out by wrapping the first film together with the second film in a partial wrap around a heated roller having a raised surface.

14. The process according to Claim 13, wherein the heated roller having the raised surface has a release coating thereon.

15. The process according to Claim 13, wherein the raised surface on the heated roller has a surface roughness of from 50 to 500 rms.

16. The process according to Claim 13, further comprising cooling the first and second films after heating the selected portions of the films, the cooling being carried out by passing the first and second films together in a partial wrap around a cooling roller.

17. The process according to Claim 16, wherein the cooling roller has a release coating thereon.

18. The process according to Claim 16, wherein the cooling roller has a Shore A hardness of from 40 to 100.

19. An integrated process for making an inflatable laminated article, comprising the steps of:

- (A) extruding a tubular film having an outside surface and an inside surface;
- (B) cooling the tubular film to a temperature low enough that the inside surface of the tubular film is cool enough not to adhere to itself;
- (C) placing the tubular film into the lay-flat configuration having a first lay-flat side and a second lay-flat side, so that a first inside lay-flat surface of the first lay-flat side of the tubular film is in contact with a second inside lay-flat surface of the second lay-flat side of the tubular film; and
- (D) heating sealing selected portions of the first lay-flat side of the tubular film to the second lay-flat side of the tubular film, the heat sealing being carried out to provide a pattern of sealed and unsealed areas with the unsealed areas providing inflatable chambers between the first lay-flat side of the tubular film and the second lay-flat side of the tubular film.

20. An integrated process for making an inflatable laminated article, comprising the steps of:

- (A) extruding a flat film having a first outer surface and a second outer surface;
- (B) cooling the film so that the first outer surface is cool enough not to adhere to itself upon being doubled back against itself;
- (C) folding the film to make a crease in a machine direction of the film, with a first leaf of the film being on a first side of the crease and a second leaf of the film

being on a second side of the crease, the first leaf being flat against the second leaf so that the first outer surface is doubled back against itself;

(D) heating sealing selected portions of the first leaf to the second leaf, the heat sealing being carried out to provide a pattern of sealed and unsealed areas with the unsealed areas providing inflatable chambers between the first leaf and the second leaf.

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